

# CITY OF DETROIT

## PERMITS & INSPECTIONS

### GENERAL INFORMATION

- Permit Requirements
- Zoning
- How to Apply for a Permit
- Housing Inspections
- Trade Permits
- Certificate of Occupancy

Buildings & Safety Engineering Department  
4th Floor Coleman A.Young Municipal Center  
Detroit, Michigan 48226  
(313) 224-3236

# **BUILDINGS & SAFETY ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW**

## **Why the Permit Process is Important**

To be sure various construction, alteration and equipment installation projects are properly completed and safe, City Ordinances require that permits be issued before work is started. It is the responsibility of the property owner or contractor (whoever is actually doing the work) to obtain the necessary permits and post them at the construction site. Zoning ordinances and building codes may also affect approval of your project. The permit application process helps assure that your project complies with these requirements. Not complying with this process could result in inconvenience, unnecessary expense and may even jeopardize your safety and that of others. The information below will help you determine which projects require permits and what other steps are involved.

## **Construction and Alterations/Change of Occupancy or Land Use**

Before you perform work on your business or home, or make a change of use or occupancy, you may need to obtain a permit. Typical activities which require a permit are:

- Constructing a new residence or commercial building
- Altering an existing building
- Building an addition on an existing building
- Dismantling or moving a building or other structure
- Building a new garage/carport or making additions or extensive alterations to an existing one
- Replacing structural members of walls, floors, steps, etc.

Permits are also required for other construction projects. Consult your contractor or call the Permit Information Center at (313) 224-3236 for guidance on ordinance requirements and procedures for obtaining permits.

## **Equipment Installations**

In addition, permits are required before installing many types of equipment including, but not limited to, the following:

Automatic Laundry Washers/Dryers	Incinerators	Electric Stoves Air Conditioners
Hot Water Supply Tanks	Plumbing	Electric Wiring Furnaces
Gas & Oil Heating Units	Food Waste Grinders	

Installation of the above equipment must be performed by contractors who are licensed by the State of Michigan and registered with the City of Detroit. In some instances, permits will be issued to properly qualified homeowners for install of the equipment in owner-occupied single family homes.

You must obtain all permits before beginning any construction project and post all permits and plans on the job site.

## **Inspections**

Any work which requires a permit must be inspected after it is completed. Various Divisions within the Buildings and Safety Engineering Department conduct these inspections, depending on the type of work. The permit holder must call the appropriate division to arrange for inspections. Phone numbers are listed under "Inspections" in "important Numbers" section.

Inspection Procedure:

- Permit holder provides appropriate Division with permit number.
- Division checks for previous inspections & schedules the inspection within 24 hours.
- An inspector is assigned, based on geographic location, and performs the inspection.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** If the work required plans and drawings, they should be available for inspector's review.

- If work is approved, the inspector leaves a green tag on site. If further work is needed, a red tag is left, followed by a mailed notice, within 3 days.
- The following day, inspector reports results to the Buildings Supervisor.
- After Supervisor's review, a certificate of inspection approval is issued immediately, if requested, unless violations are noted.
- When corrections are made, you need to schedule another inspection to confirm that work is completed.

## **Certificate of Occupancy**

You may also need to obtain a Certificate of Occupancy. See appropriate section for details.

## COMMON PROJECTS REQUIRING PERMITS

Many common construction projects require permits to assure they are lawful and safe. This page describes most of the more common projects that require permits. But The Permit Information Center on the 4th Floor of the City-County Building will be happy to provide literature and applications as well as to answer questions about your specific project or activity.

All permits can be obtained at the Permit Station on the 4th floor of the City-County Building. If you have questions, please call 224-3236.

### **New Construction**

Residential Buildings - single, two family or multiple dwellings; rooming houses; lodging houses; hotels and dormitories; hospitals, sanitariums and asylums

Accessory Buildings or Structures - Swimming pools; private garages, sheds & shelters; crane ways; tanks; and towers, bins & silos

Non-Residential Buildings/Structures-Factories & shops;laundry & dry cleaning establishments; power houses; gasoline and oil stations; community and commercial garages; warehouses; retail and wholesale stores; theaters and recreation buildings; dance & assembly halls; public administrative buildings; office buildings; and churches.

### **Additions, Alterations, Changes of Occupancy, Foundations, Repairs and Changes of Use**

#### **Residential Buildings**

- alterations to provide additional accommodations
- additions or alterations to basement and attic spaces
- building an open or enclosed porch
- additions to existing structures such as garages and sheds
- additions of decks, carports or patio covers, handicap ramps and breezeways
- roof replacement
- change of occupancy or land use
- additions or alterations to electrical, plumbing or heating services (may require licensed contractor)

#### **Non-Residential Buildings**

- additions or alterations to commercial/industrial building
- additions to structures such as storage warehouses
- additions or extension of equipment (tanks, cooling towers or ponds)
- additions of decks, docks, loading berths or handicap ramps
- additions or alterations to electrical, plumbing or heating services (may require licensed contractor)
- roof replacement
- changes of occupancy or land use

### **Dismantling or Moving Buildings or other Structures**

Clearances must be obtained from the following:

Michigan Consolidated Gas Co.  
Phone: (313) 965-8000

Detroit Edison Company  
Phone: (800) 477-4747

Board of Water Commissioners  
Phone: (313) 224-0545 or 224-0433

Board of Health  
Community & Industrial Hygiene  
Phone: (313) 876-4516

### **Erection of Signs & Poster Boards**

A permit allows you to display your temporary sign or banner for up to 15 days. You can only obtain this permit twice a year. The cost is \$75.00 per permit.

### **Erection or Repair of Fixed Commercial/Industrial Awnings**

If an awning/canopy extends over public right-of-ways, a special canopy permit is required. The awning can only display the name/identification of the building and its address/location. No advertising is permitted.

### **Trade Permits for Electrical, Mechanical and Plumbing Work**

New and/or remodeling work of these types also require a permit.

## ZONING INFORMATION

## **Detroit Zoning Ordinance (No. 390-G)**

Whenever you are involved in a construction project, it is important to be sure that it is compatible with the zoning requirements of the property involved. This is a separate issue from the permit process, but can be accomplished at the same time and place. The Permit Information Center can help you resolve any zoning questions related to your project or activity.

The Zoning Ordinance is adopted by the City of Detroit for the following purposes:

- To promote and protect the public health, safety, morals and general welfare of the community;
- To classify all property in such manner as to reflect its peculiar suitability for particular uses;
- To regulate the location, construction, reconstruction, alteration, and use of buildings, structures, and land;
- To insure adequate light, air, privacy, and convenience of access to property;
- To maintain property values;
- To protect all areas of the City from harmful encroachment by incompatible uses;
- To prevent undue building density;
- To avoid undue population density;
- To fix reasonable standards to which buildings, structures, and uses shall conform;
- To minimize congestion in the public streets by providing for off-street parking of motor vehicles and for off-street loading and unloading of commercial vehicles;
- To adequately provide transportation water, sewage disposal, education, recreation, and other public requirements;
- To eliminate non-conforming buildings, structures and uses of land;
- To define the powers and duties of the administrative officers and bodies;
- To provide penalties for violations of this Ordinance; and,
- To provide for a Board of Zoning Appeals.

### **Zoning District Classifications**

All land in the City of Detroit is zoned, with the exception of rights-of-way (public streets, berms, public sidewalks, and public alleys). All property falls into one of 25 zoning district classifications, of which the major categories are: residential; business; industrial; and special. Each classification is composed of various subcategories.

### **Zoning Coordinator**

If your zoning approval request is denied, you have a right to appeal the ruling. The Zoning Coordinator, who can be reached at (313) 224-3172.

### **REMEMBER...**

The Zoning Ordinance regulates the use of land, not the particular individual, agency or business which uses it. You may be required to obtain a license to operate a business for which a building permit is issued. Obtaining a business license is a separate process from applying for a building permit. For information on business licenses, contact the Business License Information Center, (313) 224-3178, Room 105 on the first floor of the Coleman A. Young Municipal Center.

### **Land Use & Occupancy Permits**

When a land use is listed as a MATTER OF RIGHT USE, it means that an occupancy permit may be obtained on an “over the counter” basis.

When a land use is listed as a PERMITTED WITH APPROVAL USE, it means that Buildings & Safety Engineering cannot issue an occupancy permit until a public hearing is held and findings are made to ensure that the land use will not be injurious to the surrounding neighborhood.

When a land use is NOT PERMITTED, it means that Buildings & Safety Engineering has no authority to issue an occupancy permit. You need to obtain a use variance from the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA). After a public hearing has been held and the BZA has issued a grant, Buildings & Safety Engineering can issue a permit.

For certain PERMITTED WITH APPROVAL USES, you bear a greater burden of proof to demonstrate that the land use will not injure the neighborhood. These are CONTROLLED USES and REGULATED USES. Additional requirements, standards or limitations may apply--including the need to circulate petitions among surrounding property owners/residents to document their support for the proposed use.

## PERMIT APPLICATION PROCEDURE

The City of Detroit's permit application procedures are aimed at making the process as convenient and simple as possible for you. We need to obtain certain information to be sure that your project complies with existing ordinances and is safe for you and others. To help us meet these goals, we ask that you follow the steps outlined below.

The requirements for obtaining a permit vary, depending on what your project is and what permit you are applying for. The Permit Information Center will be happy to help you figure out which documents are needed in your particular situation. The following documents are typical of those you may have to supply:

1. Permit Application--All applications are available in the Permit Information Center.
2. Legal Description of Property--Description can be a deed, land contract, lease, or bona fide sales agreement.
3. Evidence of Ownership--Deed or other evidence of ownership is required before a permit will be issued.
4. Michigan Energy Code Worksheets--These may be required and can be obtained at the Permit Information Center.
5. Plans & Building Details--Please consult our brochure for your specific activity or the Permit Information Center for details on which plans are required.

The permit process can be accomplished by visiting only one City Department. Here are the typical steps involved:

**STEP 1:** Obtain all informational material, applications and answers to any questions at:

**Permit information Center  
Buildings & Safety Engineering Department  
4th Floor, Coleman A. Young Municipal Center  
(313) 224-3236**

Visit the Center or call weekdays between 8:00 am and 4:00 pm. We can mail all required materials to you.

**STEP 2:** Completely fill out the applications on a typewriter or print in ink and bring them, along with any other required documents (such as evidence of ownership, legal description of property and construction plans) to:

**Permit Station  
4th Floor, Colman A. Young Municipal Center**

Signage at the Permit Station will help you identify the appropriate position at the counter. Trade permits are also processed there.

**STEP 3** The Zoning Technician will verify that your activity conforms to the area's zoning requirements. If it does, the Zoning Technician will conduct a review of your plans or forward them to the departments which need to review them. The complexity of your project will determine which approvals are necessary and how long the reviews will take.

If your activity is in conflict with the zoning ordinance, the Technician will explain the appeal process and refer you to the Zoning Coordinator, who will guide you through the process.

**STEP 4:** When plans are submitted for review, corrections are sometimes necessary to bring them into line with code requirements for your safety. If your project requires multiple reviews, the Plan Review Coordinator will let you know which corrections are needed before the application can be approved. Once all reviews are completed, the Coordinator will notify you. If you want to check on anything during the approval process, call the Plan Review Coordinator at 224-0297.

**STEP 5:** When your application has been approved, you will pick up your plans at the Permit Station. Once the permit is prepared, the cashier will call your name and collect the appropriate fees, which may be paid by cash, Visa, MasterCard, Discover Card or check.

**STEP 6:** Start your project.

**STEP 7:** During the work and after it is completed, various inspections will be needed. The number and type vary by project. Typical inspections needed and the numbers to call to schedule them: Buildings 224-3212; Electrical 224-3125; Heating 224-3185; Plumbing 224-3150. Remember, it is your responsibility to schedule the inspections and obtain a Certificate of Occupancy to legally occupy or use a new or modified structure.

## HOUSING INSPECTIONS

## FOR GENERAL INFORMATION, CALL (313) 224-3118

To be sure that residences in the City of Detroit are safe and comfortable to live in, the City inspects one-and two-family dwellings before they are sold to new owners. The inspection follows a set of guidelines which you can get at Neighborhood City Halls or on the 4th floor of the Coleman A. Young Municipal Center. For additional information about pre-sale inspections, call (313) 224-3105.

Here are some general guidelines to help you determine when a home that is being bought or sold needs an inspection:

### **If you are selling the home...**

1. If you live in the home and the buyer intends to live there: You may sell by disclosure--which means that you have the dwelling INSPECTED, and you give the buyer the inspection report. The buyer accepts the dwelling "as is" by signing and filing a waiver of a Certificate of Approval at the Housing Division of the Buildings and Safety Engineering Department.
2. If you do not live in the home and the buyer intends to live there: You must provide a Certificate of Approval--which means you must have the dwelling INSPECTED and make any required repairs for approval. The Certificate of Approval is given to the buyer.
3. If you sell to a buyer who does not intend to live in the home: You may sell with a Non-Occupancy Affidavit--which means the buyer accepts the dwelling "as is" WITHOUT AN INSPECTION by executing and filing a Non-Occupancy Affidavit with the Buildings & Safety Engineering Department.
4. If you sell to a tenant in the home: When the buyer has lived in the home for twelve(12) months immediately prior to the sale, NO INSPECTION is required. The sale cannot be an exercise of an option held by the seller.

**NOTE:** FHA, VA and some conventional mortgage lenders require the dwelling to be inspected and repaired as a condition of the sale.

### **If you are buying the home...**

1. If you received a Certificate of Approval at the time of sale: The dwelling was inspected and repaired, if needed, prior to the sale to meet the basic standards of liveability and habitability.
2. If you received an inspection report, signed a Waiver of Certificate of Approval and accepted the dwelling "as is": Only those defects that are IMMINENTLY DANGEROUS must be corrected. However, you are encouraged to make all corrections, so that your home will meet the basic standards of liveability and habitability.
3. If you executed a Non-Occupancy Affidavit: The home must be INSPECTED AND APPROVED before it is occupied. However, if it is occupied at the time of sale, the occupancy may be continued up to twelve (12) months without approval.

If your sale requires an inspection, you must file an application and pay the inspection fee at Housing Division of the Buildings & Safety Engineering Department. Applications are available there or at any Neighborhood City Hall. Completed applications can be mailed or delivered to the Housing Division in person. Currently, the cost of a presale inspection is \$225.00 for a single family dwelling and \$273.00 for a two-family dwelling. This fee covers an initial inspection and one reinspection, if needed. If additional inspections are needed, the fee is \$78.00.

At the time of the inspection, all utilities and equipment must be turned on and in operating condition. If you are not there to let the inspector in or if work is incomplete, the process will be delayed and you will be charged additional fees.

Certificates of Approval and inspection reports are valid for six months if the dwelling is occupied when the certificate is issued. Validity is extended for 24 months during continuous occupancy. Only those conditions that constitute an IMMINENT DANGER must be repaired if the sale does not occur or if the buyer signs a waiver accepting the dwelling "as is".

## **HOUSING INSPECTIONS - Continued**

### **Inspection Procedures**

Although procedures may vary depending on circumstances, the typical pre-sale inspection process is:

1. Submit application and fees.
2. Inspection is scheduled
3. Inspector approves property or notes deficiencies.
4. If approved, Certificate of Approval is mailed within five business days(or can be held for pick-up)
5. If deficiencies exist, owner has them corrected and schedules reinspection
6. Certificate of Approval mailed or held for pick-up

# MECHANICAL, ELECTRICAL AND PLUMBING DIVISIONS

FOR GENERAL INFORMATION CALL (313) 224-3183

The mechanical, electrical and plumbing divisions of the Buildings & Safety Engineering Department are responsible for approving permits, conducting inspections of permitted work, conducting periodic inspections of buildings, and conducting trade licensing examinations. The City issues trade permits to protect the public by ensuring that work is being performed by qualified people.

## **Residential**

**Home Sellers:** Homeowners who received certain types of plumbing, electrical or mechanical violations must obtain permits and schedule another inspection after violations have been corrected.

**Home Construction/Additions:** Homeowners must obtain permits and schedule inspections for plumbing, electrical and mechanical work performed within their premises in accordance with local ordinances. Most major construction or replacement activities require a licensed contractor.

Permit applications are available at the Permit Information Center located on the Fourth Floor of the Coleman A. Young Municipal Center or call 224-3236.

## **Trade Examinations for Licensing**

The plumbing, electrical and mechanical divisions offer examinations to qualify contractors for licenses for a variety of trades. These licenses are required to perform work in the City of Detroit. Examinations are conducted for the following:

Master Plumber	Journeyman Plumber	Drainlayer(Class A&B)	Electrical Contractor
Master Electrician	Journeyman Electrician	Fire Alarm Apprentice	Fire Alarm Contractor
Sign Contractor	Sign Specialist	Electrical Apprentice	Elevator Contractor
Elevator Journeyman	Stationary Engineer	High/LowPressureBoiler	Refrigeration Operator
Ammonia Contractor	(Class 1,2,3)	Refrigeration Journeyman	(Class 1,2,3)

## **Scheduling Plumbing, Electrical or Mechanical Inspections**

Inspections for work for which permits have been issued are conducted for all commercial and residential activity. The permit holder must call the appropriate number listed below for an inspection.

Mechanical Division	Electrical Division	Plumbing Division
(313) 224-3185	(313) 224-3125	(313) 224-3150

## **Inspection Procedure**

When the work has been completed, the contractor or homeowner who obtained the permit must call the appropriate division to schedule an inspection:

Electrical.....	224-3125
Plumbing.....	224-3150
Mechanical(Heating & Air Conditioning.....	224-3185
Elevators & Boilers.....	224-3200

If the inspector finds that the work was done properly, the contractor will be sent a Certificate of Acceptance if requested. If there are violations, a notice will be mailed to the contractor within 2 to 3 days. A reinspection should be scheduled after violations are corrected.

# **CERTIFICATES OF OCCUPANCY**

FOR GENERAL INFORMATION CALL THE PERMIT INFORMATION CENTER AT (313)224-3236

A Certificate of Occupancy & Compliance (C of O ) indicates that a building meets all city codes and is safe to occupy.

You may not LEGALLY occupy or use a building without a C of O. The C of O is issued upon request of the customer by the Buildings & Safety Engineering Department after verification that all the required division approvals (electrical, plumbing, mechanical and building) have been obtained.

There are no fees associated with Certificates of Occupancy other than any outstanding inspection fees that must be paid before a C of O is issued.

## **Request Process**

When the Building Construction or alteration is complete or substantially complete such that all necessary inspections have been successfully conducted:

- STEP 1: Customer requests a Certificate of Occupancy at the Permit Information Center, where an application is completed And attached to the Building permit for routing purposes.
- STEP 2: Customer takes a seat and waits for name to be called
- STEP 3: Licenses & Permit Clerk notifies customer of approval or denial.
- STEP 4: If all approvals are on file, the Certificate of Occupancy is issued.
- STEP 5: If all approvals are not on file, you will be told which ones need to be obtained.

# HELPFUL ORGANIZATIONS AND PHONE NUMBERS

## **CITY OF DETROIT DEPARTMENTS**

### **BUILDINGS AND SAFETY ENGINEERING**

Building Division.....	(313) 224-3212
Building Permit Clearances.....	(313) 224-3246
Housing Division.....	(313) 224-3105,6,7
Inspections	
Buildings.....	(313) 224-3212
Electrical.....	(313) 224-3125
Heating.....	(313) 224-3185
Plumbing.....	(313) 224-3150
Licenses & Permits.....	(313) 224-3175
Permit Information Center.....	(313) 224-3236
Plan Review Coordinator.....	(313) 224-0297
Plumbing.....	(313) 224-3158
Safety Engineering.....	(313) 224-3211
Electrical.....	(313) 224-3138
Structural Engineering Review.....	(313) 224-0294,5,6,7
Zoning.....	(313) 224-0311
Zoning Coordinator.....	(313) 224-3172

**BUSINESS LICENSE CENTER.....**(313) 224-3178

**CITY PLANNING COMMISSION.....**(313) 224-6225

### **CONSUMER AFFAIRS**

General Information.....	(313) 224-6995
General License Bureau.....	(313) 224-3178

### **FINANCE**

Accounting.....	(313) 224-1839
Collections.....	(313) 224-4087
Income Tax.....	(313) 224-3315
Property Tax.....	(313) 224-3566

### **FIRE**

Fire Marshal	
Inspections.....	(313) 596-2961
Plan Review.....	(313) 224-1311

### **HEALTH**

Community & Industrial Hygiene.....	(313) 876-4516
Food Service.....	(313) 876-4500

**HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION.....**(313) 224-6536

**LAW.....**(313) 224-4550

**PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT.....**(313) 224-6380

Business Services.....	(313) 224-3884
(Business attraction, retention and expansion; enterprise zone incentives; tax abatements)	
Development Services.....	(313) 224-1700
(Site development, industrial park development, commercial strip revitalization program)	
Neighborhood Development.....	(313) 224-6528
(Community-based development programs)	

**POLICE**.....(313) 596-2200

**PUBLIC LIGHTING**.....(313) 267-7318

**PUBLIC WORKS**

City Engineering.....(313) 224-3970  
224-3962

Traffic Engineering.....(313) 833-7300,01,02

**WATER AND SEWERAGE**.....(313) 224-4800

Water Supply.....(313) 224-4744  
224-4749

**OTHER BUSINESS SERVICES AND INFORMATION SOURCES**

Detroit Economic Growth Corporation.....(313) 963-2940  
(Infrastructure assistance, business loans, export assistance, foreign investment attraction, tax increment  
financing, trade missions)

Detroit Minority Business Dev. Center.....(313) 963-6232

Detroit Neighborhood Investment Corp.....(313) 965-7945

Detroit Renaissance.....(313) 259-5400

Empowerment Zone Transition Office.....(313) 983-0170

Industrial Waste.....(313) 297-9411  
297-9487

MISS DIG (General Number).....(800) 482-7171

Small Business Administration.....(313) 226-6075

WSU Small Business Institute.....(313) 577-4517

**OTHER GOVERNMENTAL SERVICES**

Detroit City Clerk.....(313) 224-3270

**STATE OF MICHIGAN**

General Information.....(313) 256-1837

Small Business Dev. Center.....(313) 964-1798

Technical Small Business Service.....(517) 373-7485

**WAYNE COUNTY**

Air Pollution.....(313) 832-5000,03

Clerk.....(313) 224-6262

Register of Deeds.....(313) 224-5875

Tract Index.....(313) 224-5880